

## Off and Running with Primary Sources

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*There's no time like the present. Don't put off 'til tomorrow what you can do today.* These two sayings have been in my thoughts as I prepare to immerse a new group of fourth-graders in the world of primary sources. The students' first encounter will take place shortly after they arrive in the classroom—the first of *many* encounters during the year! Keeping in mind that they will experience the most success, especially initially, with visual material, I chose five advertisements from the following American Memory Collection:

### Emergence of Advertising in America, 1850-1920: Selections from the Collections of Duke University

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award98/ncdhtml/eaahome.html>

The five ads chosen for this activity are listed in the box below. They can be found through a **Keyword Search** of the collection if you experience a problem with the URLs given.

After selecting the ads, I saved them as JPEG files and worked with them in Adobe Photo Shop to resize and make minor adjustments for printing. Then I made copies on cream-colored paper to make them look "old." Students will be working

in cooperative groups, so I made one "set" of ads for each group.

To help students "look at" and analyze information, I created an analysis worksheet for each ad. These worksheets have been included for your use. Feel free to modify them to meet the needs of your students.

When the students finish the activity, we will meet as a whole group and discuss their findings. This is a starting point for dialogue about primary sources.

Subsequent activities will familiarize students with other types of primary sources.

It can be challenging to find meaningful primary source materials for fourth-graders, but there are



**"Four Roses"  
Barometer: Infallible  
Weather Indicator**

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/ea/ephemera/A05/A0534/A0534-72dpi.html>

#### Something New for the Boys

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/ea/ephemera/A06/A0655/A0655-72dpi.html>

#### Celebrated Home Washer

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/ea/ephemera/A04/A0478/A0478-01-72dpi.html>

#### Four Roses Barometer

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/ea/ephemera/A05/A0534/A0534-72dpi.html>

#### Peerless Auto Horn

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/ea/ephemera/A00/A0023/A0023-02-72dpi.html>

#### First! Cheapest! Best!

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/ea/ephemera/A04/A0426/A0426-72dpi.html>

many avenues to travel in the American Memory Collection when searching for those materials. Consider maps, photographs, prints, sheet music, and motion pictures. There **are** text documents that are valuable for this grade level, but it takes a little more "thoughtful" searching.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Social Studies Primary Source Activity

**First! Cheapest! Best!**

Color drawing/blotter

Rare Book, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University

1. What product is advertised?
2. Who manufactures this product?  
  
Where?
3. What do we call "Super-Carb. Soda" today? (Hint: It is often used in baking.)
4. What year was the product first manufactured?
5. What year was the trademark obtained?
6. Why do you think the company chose a **cow** to represent their product?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Social Studies Primary Source Activity

### **“Four Roses” Barometer**

Color drawing/card

Rare Book, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University

(\*You may need to use the dictionary for help with questions 1 & 2\*)

1. What is a barometer?
2. What does *infallible* mean?
3. Where should you hang this barometer?
4. What kind of weather is indicated if the tail is wet and swinging?
5. How is “fair” weather indicated?
6. Do you agree that the “Four Roses” barometer would be an ***infallible*** weather indicator? Explain your answer.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Social Studies Primary Source Activity

### **Celebrated Home Washer**

Black/white drawing from a booklet

Rare Book, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University

1. This ad for the “Celebrated Home Washer” was printed in the year 1869. List **4 clues** from the ad that help you identify that time period.

2. What saying from Benjamin Franklin is included in the ad?

3. In what four major cities was this washer manufactured?

**CITY**

**STATE**

4. How much did the washer cost?

Does that seem like a reasonable price? Explain your answer.